



USDA – National
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Cooperating with
Tennessee Department
of Agriculture

Debra K. Kenerson, Director

Ken Givens, Commissioner

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/tn> nass-tn@nass.usda.gov Phone 1-800-626-0987

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Featuring:

Planting Intentions Prices Received U.S. Hogs & Pigs Livestock Slaughter Grain Stocks
Dairy Products Prices Chicken & Eggs U.S. Cattle Supply & Disposition Nursery Release

Cotton and Soybeans to Dominate in 2006; Corn Acreage to Plunge

For the third consecutive year, Tennessee producers intend to devote an increasing amount of their acreage to cotton and soybeans, according to the results of the March Agricultural Survey conducted by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Field Office. Rising input costs and better market prices for cotton and soybeans relative to other crops have convinced growers to expand their acreages, mainly to the detriment of corn. Winter wheat seeded last fall is expected to rebound slightly from 2005's historical low, while hay farmers also look to re-stock supplies with a moderate boost in acreage. Tobacco growers are expected to sharply reduce their acreage for the seventh consecutive year. "These acreage estimates are intended to reflect grower intentions as of March 1," stated State Director Debra Kenerson, "Changes in prices, production costs, and weather conditions will be major factors in determining what farmers actually choose to produce this year."

Prospective **soybean** acreage, at 1.22 million acres, is up 8 percent from a year ago and the highest since 1999. Conversely, planted area of **corn** is forecast at 530,000 acres, 18 percent below 2005 and the lowest since records began in 1926. The 2006 **sorghum** acreage is forecast at 18,000 acres, down 4,000 acres from the previous year and also a record low. Tennessee's **cotton** acreage is forecast at 680,000 acres, up 6 percent from 2005 and the highest since 1995. **Winter wheat** seedings for the 2006 season totaled 300,000 acres, up 25 percent from the 2005 crop. **Hay** producers intend to harvest an estimated 2.03 million acres, 145,000 acres more than in 2005. The State's **burley** tobacco area for harvest in 2006 is forecast at 13,000 acres, down 24 percent from the previous year and the lowest level since 1921. **Dark fire-cured** acreage is forecast at 5,400 acres, while **dark air-cured** is expected to total 450 acres.

Planted Acreage, 2004-2005 and Intended 2006, Tennessee and United States

Crop	2004	2005	2006 ¹	2006/2005	2004	2005	2006 ¹	2006/2005
Tennessee					United States			
	1,000 Acres			Percent		1,000 Acres		Percent
Corn	680	650	530	82	80,929	81,759	78,019	95
Sorghum	20	22	18	82	7,486	6,454	6,483	100
Winter wheat	400	240	300	125	43,350	40,433	41,404	102
Soybeans	1,210	1,130	1,220	108	75,208	72,142	76,895	107
Cotton, all	530	640	680	106	13,658.6	14,195.4	14,634.0	103
Tobacco, all ²	30.26	22.95	18.85	82	408.05	298.02	306.63	103
Dark fired-cured	5.72	5.50	5.40	98	11.73	11.84	11.78	99
Burley	24.00	17.00	13.00	76	153.15	100.10	83.50	83
Dark air-cured	0.54	0.45	0.45	100	4.26	4.15	4.25	102
Hay ²	1,935	1,885	2,030	108	61,966	61,649	61,478	100

¹ Intended plantings for 2006. ² Acres harvested.

Prices Received by Farmers: Tennessee & U.S., March 2006 with Comparisons

Commodity	Unit	Tennessee			United States		
		March 2005	February ¹ 2006	March ² 2006	March 2005	February ¹ 2006	March ² 2006

Dollars Per Unit

Field Crops

Corn	bu.	2.09	2.28	2.25	2.02	2.02	2.01
Cotton Lint	lb.	.413	.480	.479 ³	.403	.490	.496 ³
Sorghum	cwt.	⁴	⁴	n/a	3.04	3.40	3.29
Soybeans	bu.	6.11	5.81	5.70	5.95	5.67	5.55
Winter Wheat	bu.	3.66	3.41	n/a	3.32	3.59	3.67

Livestock

All beef cattle	cwt.	84.40	82.40	80.60	91.00	92.40	89.20
Steers/heifers	cwt.	106.00	106.00	103.00	95.20	97.80	94.10
Cows	cwt.	52.00	47.00	47.00	55.00	49.70	49.90
Calves	cwt.	128.00	130.00	126.00	136.00	142.00	138.00

¹ Entire month. ² Mid-month. ³ Based on purchases first half of month. ⁴ Price not published to avoid disclosure of individual firms. n/a = not available.

U.S. Hog Inventory: U.S. inventory of all hogs and pigs on March 1, 2006 was 60.1 million head. This was up 1 percent from March 1, 2005, but down 2 percent from December 1, 2005. Breeding inventory, at 6.03 million head, was up 1 percent from last year and up slightly from the previous quarter. Market hog inventory, at 54.1 million head, was up 1 percent from last year but down 2 percent from last quarter.

The December 2005-February 2006 pig crop, at 25.7 million head, was up 1 percent from 2005 and up 2 percent from 2004. Sows farrowing during this period totaled 2.84 million head, up slightly from both 2004 and 2005. The sows farrowed during this quarter represented 47 percent of the breeding herd. The average pigs saved per litter was 9.03 for the December 2005-February 2006 period, compared to 8.94 last year. Pigs saved per litter by size of operation ranged from 7.50 for operations with 1-99 hogs and pigs to 9.10 for operations with more than 5,000 hogs and pigs. U.S. hog producers intend to have 2.90 million sows farrow during the March-May 2006 quarter, up 1 percent from the actual farrowings during the same period in both 2004 and 2005. Intended farrowings for June-August 2006, at 2.92 million sows, are up slightly from 2005 and up 1 percent from 2004. The total number of hogs under contract, owned by operations with over 5,000 head, but raised by contractees, accounted for 39 percent of the total U.S. hog inventory, unchanged from last year.

U.S. Livestock Slaughter: Cattle slaughter for the United States during February 2006, totaled 2.35 million head, up slightly from February 2005. The average live weight was up 30 pounds from the previous year, at 1,283 pounds. Calf slaughter totaled 53,000 head, down 14 percent from February 2005. The average live weight was 35 pounds above last year, at 362 pounds. Hog kill totaled 8.05 million head, 1 percent below February 2005. The average live weight was 2 pounds above the previous year, at 272 pounds. Sheep slaughter totaled 202,500 head, 5 percent below last year. The average live weight was 145 pounds, up 5 pounds from February a year ago.

Livestock Slaughter¹: Tennessee & United States, February 2005 and 2006

Species	Number Slaughtered		Total Live Weight		Average Live Weight	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006

1,000 Head

1,000 Pounds

Pounds

Tennessee

Cattle	1.2	1.1	1,074	1,086	922	952
Calves	0.1	0.1	41	29	511	490
Hogs	46.7	45.8	22,589	21,971	483	479
Sheep & lambs	0.8	0.8	68	59	81	78

United States

Cattle	2,342.9	2,345.9	2,936,796	3,009,921	1,253	1,283
Calves	61.7	53.0	20,182	19,192	327	362
Hogs	8,107.8	8,054.7	2,188,843	2,190,183	270	272
Sheep & lambs	214.0	202.5	29,993	29,344	140	145

¹ Includes slaughter under Federal inspection and other commercial slaughter (excludes farm slaughter).

Grain Stocks: Tennessee and U.S., March 1, 2005 and 2006 with Comparisons

	Tennessee			United States		
	Mar 1, 2005	Dec 1, 2005	Mar 1, 2006	Mar 1, 2005	Dec 1, 2005	Mar 1, 2006
1,000 Bushels						
On-Farm Stocks ¹						
Corn				4,137,000	6,325,000	4,055,000
Wheat				304,710	513,010	256,000
Soybeans				795,000	1,345,000	872,000
Grain Sorghum				33,400	55,000	25,900
Oats				43,500	60,100	41,900
Off-Farm Stocks ²						
Corn	11,230	16,101	14,308	2,619,334	3,489,957	2,932,178
Wheat	5,823	9,230	5,357	679,681	916,414	716,240
Soybeans	2,218	6,815	2,411	586,364	1,157,098	796,555
Grain Sorghum	³	703	446	170,122	235,376	166,939
Oats	110	³	100	38,946	35,617	32,812
Total Stocks ¹						
Corn				6,756,334	9,814,957	6,987,178
Wheat				984,391	1,429,424	972,240
Soybeans				1,381,364	2,502,098	1,668,555
Grain Sorghum				203,522	290,376	192,839
Oats				82,446	95,717	74,712

¹ Estimates for Tennessee on-farm stocks are not published. ² Includes stocks at mills, elevators, warehouses, terminals, and processors. ³ Not published to avoid disclosures of individual operations.

Dairy Products Prices: Cheddar Cheese prices received for US 40 pound Blocks averaged \$1.15 per pound for the week ending March 25. The price per pound increased 1.3 cents from the previous week. The price for US 500 pound Barrels adjusted to 38 percent moisture averaged \$1.13 per pound, up 0.6 cents from the previous week. Butter prices received for 25 kilogram and 68 pound boxes meeting USDA Grade AA standards averaged \$1.15 per pound for the week ending March 25. The U.S. price per pound increased 0.1 cent from the previous week.

Nonfat Dry Milk prices received for bag, tote and tanker sales meeting USDA Extra Grade or USPH Grade A standards averaged 86.0 cents per pound for the week ending March 25. The U.S. price per pound increased 0.2 cents from the previous week. Dry Whey prices received for bag, tote and tanker sales meeting USDA Extra Grade standards averaged 32.9 cents per pound for the week ending March 25. The U.S. price per pound decreased 1.0 cent from the previous week.

Chicken & Eggs: U.S. egg production totaled 6.97 billion during February 2006, up 1 percent from last year. Production included 5.99 billion table eggs, and 989 million hatching eggs, of which 927 million were broiler-type and 62 million were egg-type. The number of layers during February 2006 averaged 350 million, up slightly from a year earlier. February egg production per 100 layers was 1,995 eggs, also up slightly from February 2005.

Layers and Eggs: Layers on Hand and Eggs Produced by Selected States and United States, During February 2005 and 2006

Selected States	Table Egg Layers in Flocks 30,000 or more		All Layers ¹		Eggs per 100 for All Layers ¹	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
Thousands			Number			
Alabama	1,868	1,696	9,232	8,897	1,787	1,765
Arkansas	4,418	4,125	15,099	14,512	1,729	1,723
Georgia	11,204	9,785	20,628	19,063	1,895	1,915
North Carolina	3,339	3,402	10,948	11,073	1,790	1,797
All Other States ²	262,447	266,161	292,884	296,108	2,020	2,027
United States	283,276	285,169	348,791	349,653	1,986	1,995

¹ Includes all layers and eggs produced in both table egg and hatching egg flocks regardless of size. ² Tennessee included in all other states total.

Upturn in U.S. Cattle Cycle Indicated

Current and previous year increases in the U.S. cattle inventory support an upturn in the present cattle cycle. A review of the cattle cycle over the last two decades reveals downward trends of 8 years for 1982-1990 and 1996-2004. However, the most recent downward turn in the cycle decreased at a much lower rate, dropping about 9 million head from the peak in 1996 compared to the previous downward cycle decrease of about 20 million head from the 1982 crest. The trough year of 2004 with an estimated 94.9 million head represents the lowest January 1 cattle and calves inventory since 1959 and is 928,000 less than the trough year of 1990.

The January 1, 2006 Cattle and Calves inventory at 97.1 million head is the largest inventory since the 2001 inventory number of 97.3 million, supporting the basis of an upturn in the cattle cycle. This was an increase of 1.66 million head over last year and 2.21 million head above two years ago. The beef cow herd is the highest since 2001 and beef replacement heifers were the highest since 1997. The dairy herd buy-out program may have helped to slow the expansion of the milk cow herds to less than 1 percent annual increase compared to 2004. However, milk replacement heifers are the highest since 1987 reflecting the growing tendency among dairy producers to replace their milk cows at a higher rate than in the past.

Get “In the Zone,” Get Color All Year Long

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — “The forsythia, redbud, and Bradford pears are blooming, so we know spring is here,” says Rob Beets, marketing specialist with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. “But spring shouldn’t be the only season you could recognize just by looking at your yard—Tennessee’s climate allows for plants that show off their colors all across the calendar.”

“According to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, most of Tennessee is in zone 6b and 7a,” says Beets. “The map’s zones run from 1 – the coldest including Fairbanks, Alaska – to 11, including Honolulu, Hawaii. Tennessee’s zone ratings tell us that most of us can keep plants that will tolerate temps down to about 5 to -5 F.” “Keep that in mind when you are planning your landscape this spring and diversify so that each season benefits from color,” says Beets. “Tennessee retail growers offer a wide range of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs that make the most of our zones.”

“The first thing you need to do is make sure you know whether the plant you choose prefers sun or shade, then plant accordingly,” says Beets. “Also, when planting anything, dig the hole twice the width of the pot size or ball, and plant it about a half inch to an inch above soil level. The worst thing you can do is plant it too deep. Giving a plant the right amount of water helps it get established as well.” “With trees and shrubs that are ball and burlap, once you place the ball in the hole, you need to remove the string, and cut the burlap off the top.”

For more information on Tennessee’s nurseries and greenhouses, visit www.picktnproducts.org.